

TOP SECRET/UMBRAINFORMATION

April 28, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John Holdridge

SUBJECT: COSVN Directive on the Communists' Spring Campaign

A recent COSVN directive on enemy strategy in South Vietnam emphasizes continued attacks against the government's pacification program. Dated March 28 and addressed to Communist commands in the III Corps region, the directive admits that the GVN is "decisively contesting" for the allegiance of the population and declares that defeat of pacification is the "most pressing central mission."

According to the document, this is to be accomplished by involving the masses in a much broader insurgent movement. Conventional military action is still important, COSVN says, but it should be used as an "effective lever" and not as a "substitute" for mass agitation and political action. At several points in the document, strong criticism is directed at previous military highpoints which were followed by a general let-down and withdrawal until the next highpoint. The directive repeatedly emphasizes the need for coordinated and sustained military and political pressure. Only in this fashion, the directive concludes, can gains be consolidated and Communist strength be increased.

Comment: In stressing these points, COSVN clearly reveals its concern about the question of momentum. The directive also suggests the Communists still intend to pursue a low level, protracted struggle with main force units largely confined to a supporting role.

NSA Review Completed.

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MORI C05099102

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